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ABSTRACT

Problems and barriers concerning transfer policies, residency, and graduation requirements that women often face when reentering the educational system are identified. Additionally, ways in which institutions can be more responsive to the needs of reentry students are suggested. A wide range of possible actions is included so that institutions can pursue those appropriate to their individual circumstances. Credit transfer is one of the major barriers to women seeking to reenter college. The following topics are considered: credit by examination: the time limit for completion of graduate study: credit for prior experience: the requirement that all or a certain number of credits can be earned as a full-time student: extension courses and residency: courses for military personnel: special populations: legal considerations: recruitment of reentry women as transfer students: admissions: counseling: registration: and other student services. A selected list of resources is included. (SW)

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Barriers to Re-entry Women: College Transfer Policies, Residency and Graduation Requirements*

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, there has been an important change in overall student enrollment. The number of traditional (18-22 year old) students has been dropping, while adult students (23 and older) have been going to school in ever increasing numbers. These changes have occurred first, because there has been a shift in the mean age of the U.S. population toward older people; second, more adults are making the decision to go to college, whether for career advancement or personal fullfillment; and third, institutions have made special efforts to attract adult students.

Because most colleges and universities were designed for young students, some established school policies may need to be modified to accommodate the increasing number of adult learners. Within this group, women are the largest and fastest growing segment—since October 1978 two-thirds of the older college students have been women.[1] With that in mind, this paper will concentrate on three types of school policies which have a direct effect on helping or hindering the participation of adult or "re-entry" women students: transfer of credit policies, residency requirements, and graduation requirements. These policies are not only important to the re-entry woman once she enrolls, but may be even more critical in deciding *if* she enrolls in the first place.

College transfer policies, residency and graduation requirements often present barriers to the full participation of re-entry women in higher education because

WANTED: Your Opinion

As part of its WEEA project on the educational needs of re-entry women and other nontraditional postsecondary students, the Project on the Status and Education of Women seeks your reactions and comments on each one of the papers developed. Please help us by filling out the brief questionnaire at the back of this paper and return it by June 15, 1980 in the pre-paid envelope we have provided. We look forward to receiving your suggestions.

* This paper was written by Jeanne Fisher-Thompson. Staff from the Women's Re-entry Project, and the Project on the Status and Education of Women also contributed to the research and development of this paper.

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they affect the number of courses which must be taken. In general:

- *graduation requirements* determine the total number of credits a student needs to obtain a degree, as well as specific courses needed;
- *residency requirements* determine how many of these credits must be taken on the campus of the degree-granting institution and how many must be taken as a full-time student; and
- *transfer policies* determine which courses taken elsewhere may be counted toward the degree.

For the student who starts and completes an entire degree on the same campus, graduation requirements usually fall into place, and transfer and residency requirements are generally not relevant. But for the re-entry student who begins a degree at one institution and wants to complete it somewhere else, transfer, residency, and graduation policies take on a critical importance.

This paper will identify problems and barriers concerning transfer policies, residency and graduation requirements which women often face when re-entering the educational system. Additionally, ways in which institutions can be more responsive to the needs of re-entry students are suggested. Whether or not a particular suggestion is appropriate will depend on the characteristics of the institution and those of its re-entry students. A wide range of possible actions is included so that institutions can pursue those most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

Because many of the barriers which limit the access of women also limit the access of other nontraditional students, institutions are likely to find many of the issues and recommendations in this paper helpful in increasing educational opportunities and participation for other nontraditional students as well.

Re-Entry Women

Many adult women entering college have had the equivalent of at least one year of college courses and are in fact "re-entering." Thus, the transfer of credits earned earlier affects a large number of these students. Also, a large percentage of women have developed different interests since their original college experience and want a different major when they return to school. Thus, they may lose credits for some of their previous courses because they no longer apply to their major.

Although adult women students may differ widely in age, background, amount of education, economic and marital status, and so on, they have all previously interrupted their education at some point before enrolling (or re-enrolling) in a particular institution. Most colleges and universities have no idea of even the number of re-entry women transfer students on their own campuses, because the data are not compiled that way.

For the purpose of this paper, a "re-entry woman student" is defined as any woman who has interrupted her education after high school for at least a few years, and is now re-entering or seeking to re-enter a college or university for the purpose of completing a degree. She may never have attended college; she may have "dropped out" before completing a degree; or she may be starting a new undergraduate or graduate degree. The re-entry woman may have interrupted her study for several reasons such as:

- marriage;
- child rearing;
- starting work;
- moving to a different location, perhaps because of her husband's job;
- economic reasons.

Some of the reasons that the re-entry woman did not continue her education initially may still be operating when she does return to school. For example, she may have difficulty in getting child care, in financing her degree, or combining school with work. A re-entry woman will usually have many more demands on her time than a traditional 18-22 year old student. It is therefore especially important that she be able to use the credits she has already earned toward completing her degree and not waste time repeating courses or duplicating credits. Furthermore, if she is discouraged in obtaining credit, she may not go to school at all.

The *longer* a student has been out of school, the more likely it is that she will:

- lose transferable credits because of a change in her major or the age of past courses;
- be unable to fulfill the residency requirement without taking additional courses, even though she may have met this requirement at her previous institution;
- no longer fulfill graduation requirements because the institution she plans to enter has different requirements than the school where she earned her first credits.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT POLICIES

Census Bureau statistics show that the average American moves 12.9 times during his or lifetime. In fact, 50 percent of the U.S. population moves every five years.

The transfer student is no longer a rarity. In fact, some institutions have become dependent on transfer students for growth and even maintenance of enrollment levels. Subsequently, some institutions have set up offices whose sole concern is to ease the way for transfer students, many of whom are re-entry women.

Although each institution sets its own policy for the acceptance of transfer credits, there are some general trends:

- transfer is usually easier between similar schools (such as large, public university to large, public university; small, private college to small, private college, etc.);
- smaller schools are generally more flexible than large ones in accepting transfers;
- graduate departments are more difficult to transfer into than undergraduate departments.

Some problems are common to most transfer students, including re-entry women:

- many students find it difficult to transfer credits in a course which the second school does not offer, although this can sometimes count as an elective;
- transfer students from two-year colleges are sometimes treated as second class citizens by four-year institutions;
- transfer students often have to register with freshmen at the new school, after the other upperclassmen have already signed up for classes, thus making it difficult for them to obtain a good schedule;
- D grades are often not accepted in transfer, although they would apply toward graduation at the school where they were earned.

New Time, New Place, Old Problems

The re-entry woman often has problems related to the interruption of education and the length of time she has been out of school. For example, the "repeated course" is a frequent obstacle for re-entry students. One woman explained her experience this way:

"I took a graduate course in Personality Theory when I first earned my Master's degree. Six years later, I enrolled for a degree in a large state university and had to take the course again. When my children were born, I temporarily dropped out for a few years, and enrolled later in a different department, and had to repeat the course again. My family moved a year later and I began doctoral studies again, at still another state university, and was required to take the same course once more, even though I was teaching it in another department in the same institution. Incidentally, my grades were A each time I took the course."

Credit transfer is one of the major barriers to women seeking to re-enter college, whether they are seeking transfer of credit from a two-year school to a four-year school, transferring back to school after a long absence to complete an undergraduate degree, or to begin or complete a graduate program. Almost every re-entry woman has had one or more of these additional problems:

- the requirements at the new school are different from those at the school where she started, and she may have to take extra courses;
- some of the courses she has taken in the past are outdated, such as science courses and may need to be repeated;
- the "time limit" for completion of certain degrees has expired and "cancelled" out her earlier study, so that she may have to start from the beginning again;
- if she has changed her major after being out of school, she may have many credits in an area no longer transferable to her new area of specialization;
- her school has no set policies to deal with her re-entry situation and she is viewed as an irritating "special case;"
- she may have had a low grade point average when she left school, which means she may have difficulty in being accepted to a school even though her motivation is much greater now, and she is more likely to get better grades;
- she may choose a school partly because of the ease with which it accepts transfer credit, rather than its specific curriculum.

Who Decides Which Courses May Be Transferred

"The applicability of any earned transfer credit to the degree program requirements will be determined by the major department or division in which the applicant eventually enrolls."

—From a college catalog

Transfer policies are often not clearly delineated. Decisions are frequently made on a case-by-case basis, and are sometimes very subjective. Additionally, transfer policies are often elusive. Policies as described in college catalogs often bear little resemblance to the way in which transfer is actually carried out. In two studies, the criteria governing transfer were more related to "individual attitudes, interests and prejudices of those charged with the responsibility of administering the transfer process," rather than set institutional policies.[2] In many instances, published criteria appear stricter than they actually are. Students who take the published criteria at face value may fare less well than students who do not, or may be discouraged from applying for transfer.

Generally, the department chair is the most likely person to decide who will be allowed to major in that department, and which previous courses will receive credit. Admissions offices and re-entry programs often advise potential transfer students to present their credentials in person to the individual who actually makes these decisions.

Some schools, such as the University of Minnesota and Brevard Community College (FL) have instituted training sessions for admissions officers, counselors, academic advisers, financial aid officers, and other staff who must deal with re-entry women in increasing numbers. These sessions meet periodically and include information about the special characteristics of re-entry women and the institutional policies which affect them.

Elective Credit for Old Courses

In many institutions an old course which is not transferable in the major or minor field may be salvageable as an elective. In the School of Nursing at De Paul University (IL), for example, old science credits can sometimes be transferred as general education credits, so they are not completely lost. This could be done as well with courses in mathematics, psychology, language, or any other subject where there have been new discoveries that make older courses outmoded.

By accepting the older course material as general electives, the stringency of academic requirements in the major field is unchanged from the institution's point of view. From the re-entry student's perspective, the institution has recognized the time spent in class years ago. Although the actual number of such transferable credits in question may be small, the handling of these credits by the institution may well determine whether the re-entry woman enrolls there or goes elsewhere.

Testing Out: Getting Credit by Examination

More than 62 percent of all colleges and universities use CLEP exams, and over 74 percent use faculty-designed exams to give students the option of testing out of courses.[3]

"Testing out" of certain courses has enabled many transfer students to avoid spending a lot of time in classes they did not need. Sometimes called "challenge exams," the tests measure the student's proficiency in a given subject. Upon passing the test, the student will either be given credit for the course which will count toward graduation, or be exempted from taking the course. In the latter case, the student may have to take another course to fulfill graduation requirements, depending upon the policy of the institution or the department.

Examinations used for testing out may be standardized tests or those designed by faculty. Credit earned through standardized tests often transfers, especially at two-year schools. In contrast, credits obtained through faculty-designed tests are often not accepted at other institutions.

CLEP Tests and Others

The most commonly used standardized test for obtaining credit is the College Level Examination Program (CLEP), developed by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). There are two kinds of CLEP tests: general examinations—given in humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, mathematics, and English composition—which allow students to earn lower division credit for distribution requirements; and subject examinations, given in a wide variety of specific subject areas to enable students to obtain credit for individual courses. Additionally, American College Testing offers the Proficiency Examination Program (PEP) which corresponds to a variety of upper and lower division courses. [New York state is the only state that has its own College Proficiency Exam Program (CPEP).]

Most schools place a limit on the number of credits earned by tests with a lower limit for graduate credits, if allowed at all. However, there are some institutions where an entire degree can be obtained through testing. For example, the Regents External Degree Program of the University of the State of New York offers nine associate and baccalaureate degrees which may be earned entirely through examination credit.[4]

Non-Collegiate Courses

Another way to facilitate transfer is to accept credit for high caliber non-collegiate courses, sometimes given by volunteer organizations, military services, businesses or associations. There are a number of publications available to help schools evaluate the worth of non-collegiate courses, some of which are listed at the end of this paper.

Cooperative Arrangements

Some schools have worked out mutual agreements not only to ease the transfer process but also to share resources. Students can receive credit for all courses taken at any of the participating schools. About one-quarter of all colleges and universities now participate in some sort of cooperative arrangement.[5] In addition to easily transferred credit, these cooperative systems or consortia may also include shared use of faculty and staff, group insurance plans, joint publications, shared facilities, synchronized academic calendars, common course listings, coordinated academic advising, and cross-registration. The students benefit from a greater breadth of course material and facilities while the institutions retain their own appeal.[6]

The Time Barrier and Graduate Study

One of the most difficult obstacles for re-entry women is the "time limit" for completion of graduate study. This artificial limit on learning may have served a purpose when it was initially instituted, perhaps to discourage "perpetual students," or to assure that courses taken were still relevant at the time the degree was granted. Whatever their origin, they inadvertently penalize women who have been out of school for a long period, usually because of child rearing responsibilities.

Depending on the institution and the degree, time limits generally range from three to seven years. If the student does not complete the degree within that time, he or she cannot obtain the degree at that institution and may have to start all over again. This problem is amplified by the fact that graduate credit is less likely to transfer from one institution to another; the maximum number of transferable credits is sometimes set as low as six. If a woman with graduate credits moves one or more times, the loss of credit incurred at each move may make it very difficult, if not impossible, to finish the degree within the allotted time. Because many younger students are also leaving school for a time and then returning later, the time limit may also discourage many other mobile students in addition to re-entry women from completing graduate degrees.

Part-time students are also at a disadvantage in relation to time limits for degree completion. A woman who cannot attend school full-time because she must work to help support her family or because her family responsibilities preclude full-time study, may not be able to complete the required number of courses if she only attends part-time. Such women may never enroll in the first place, drop out, or postpone their studies until they can attend full-time.

Institutions may want to reassess their time limit policies for educational credit to see if they are indeed

accomplishing whatever purpose they were initiated for, and if needed, explore alternate ways of accomplishing their aim.

New Developments Regarding Transfer

- St. Louis University has just received a $40,000 grant from the Exxon Corporation to establish a model program that will fully integrate the transfer student into a four-year academic program. The office of academic advising at the school is developing a comprehensive program for advising transfer students, and plans to publish an adviser's manual on transfer policy, procedures, and practices to be used by faculty members.
- The National Registry for Continuing Education is a centralized, nationwide record-keeping system for non-credit courses taken in various settings. This saves the student from having to write to each place separately to request a transcript. It is especially helpful for professional associations whose members are required to show evidence of participation in continuing education, and for students who take courses at many different places. The Registry was established in 1977 by the American College Testing Program. For a single fee, the student can request that a transcript including all non-credit courses from all institutions attended be sent to any place specified. However, in order to use the service in the first place, the institution at which the student takes courses must participate in the Registry system.[7]

GETTING CREDIT FOR PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Experiential credit, or credit awarded for life experience, is becoming more common at institutions all over the country, and is of special interest to re-entry women. According to the Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL), over half of the colleges and universities in the U.S. accept some type of experiential credit. CAEL has published a number of guides to help schools assess life experiences and incorporate these nontraditional credits.[8]

The granting of experiential credit is based on the premise that people should also be able to earn credit for things they have learned outside the classroom. For example, a woman who had worked her way up in a business to the position of chief bookkeeper would be expected to have learned more than the rudiments of bookkeeping, even if she had never taken a class in the subject. If she were to re-enter school as a business major at this point, an institution that granted experiential credit would allow her to transfer in with at least some bookkeeping credits. She would then be able to start taking more advanced courses in financial management, etc. without spending time in a redundant introductory bookkeeping course.

Many institutions that grant experiental credit require that the student take a course in order to prepare a "portfolio" to describe her experience. This portfolio provides the institution with visible evidence of time productively spent while not in school and helps the institution to determine the number of credits that the experience warrants. Experiential credit is sometimes awarded for many different types of experience where valuable skills have been learned, even if the skills are not identical to classroom curricula. For example, a woman who has done volunteer work for a political party may be able to obtain credit for an introductory course on the American political system.

Once experiential credit is earned it usually transfers fairly easily on the undergraduate level to other schools that grant experiential credit. However, it is usually extremely difficult or impossible to transfer experiential credit to a graduate program, or to colleges which do not accept experiential credit in their own baccalaureate programs.[9]

RESIDENCY REQUIREMENTS

Residency requirements determine how many credits a student needs to take on the campus of the degree-granting institution, and whether or not these credits have to be earned as a full-time student.[10] For example, students may be required to spend at least one of the four undergraduate years as a *full-time* student on campus. In some schools or departments, a graduate degree may not only require that a large proportion of courses be taken on that campus, but also that all or a specific number of credits be taken as a full-time student.

The Mobility Problem

Most residency requirements were established at a time when it was assumed that Americans lived in only one or two places during a lifetime. The requirements were not intended to pose hardships, only to assure that students had a certain amount of contact with the institution before leaving with a degree.

However, times have changed. For many students, particularly re-entry women, staying in one place long enough to fulfill the residency requirement is often not possible. A typical scenario is that of the student finally completing the residency requirement at one school, only to be uprooted so that a spouse can enhance a career elsewhere. The student then must begin building up the residency requirement from scratch at a different institution in the new location.

The Full-Time Requirement and the Part-Time Dilemma

The requirement, especially in graduate programs, that all or a certain number of credits counting toward residency must be earned as a full-time student is a particular hardship for many women. Some women can only attend school part-time, particularly those with small children and/or those who must work to support their families. They *cannot* fulfill such a requirement—no matter how long they attend the institution or how many credits they earn. One re-entry woman described her predicament this way:

"I was a part-time graduate student when my two children were pre-schoolers. After I had accumu-

lated 18 credits, I had to enroll full-time to meet the residency requirement, since part-time study was not permitted after earning 18 credits. I couldn't handle a full-time load at that point, so I dropped out at mid-semester. I had to wait another five years to resume school full-time."

Extension Courses and Residency

Still another obstacle is that extension and/or off-campus courses do not always count toward fulfilling the residency requirements at an institution, a fact not always made clear in catalogs and at registration. Ironically, residency requirements do not generally assure that already enrolled students will not transfer out of the schools, since students are likely to leave the area if their families leave. To the contrary, stringent residency requirements only make it more difficult for other relocated students to transfer in. The institution, then, loses a potential source of revenue. Some schools, such as Chicago State University and Eastern Illinois University, have allowed the residency requirement to be fulfilled by part-time study, courses taught off-campus and independent study extension courses, or by courses taken at other schools through mutual agreement. Residency requirements need to be reevaluated in light of changing trends—where students move frequently, and often balance study with other responsibilities.

Courses for Military Personnel: A Possible Model for Civilians

One of the best systems for coping with mobile students is the network of "Servicemen's Opportunity Colleges" (SOC). Started in 1972, 300 colleges and universities nationwide now participate in this network, to help military personnel continue their education regardless of duty schedule or base of operation. The program is sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Funding comes from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Department of Defense.

SOC institutions limit their residency requirement at the "home institution" to 25 percent of the credits in a program of study, and this requirement can be satisfied by any courses offered by the institution which are applicable to the degree program. There are no time restraints except for those necessary to maintain course sequences.

If the particular circumstances of an individual make it difficult or impossible to fulfill the residency requirement, SOC institutions can waive or modify the requirement upon petition. In general, SOC institutions attempt to minimize the loss of credit and avoid making students take the same course more than once. Thus, despite extensive relocation, military personnel can accumulate enough courses for a degree; their spouses, even if they took the same courses, would not be eligible. Unfortunately, no system similar to this program exists for civilians, although the SOC system could certainly act as a model.

OTHER GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For the most part, the number of courses required for graduation has not changed markedly over the years at individual schools. Typical requirements of a school on the semester system are 60 credit hours for an associate degree, 120 for an undergraduate degree, about 30 for a master's degree, and 80 to 90 for a doctoral degree.

New Courses and a Word of Caution

At some institutions, these graduation requirements can now be fulfilled in a variety of ways. For example, credits earned through off-campus extension courses, through part-time study, through independent research, through television courses, etc. are now accepted toward the graduation requirement at many schools. However, students often inaccurately assume that *all* institutions will apply extension or part-time study credits toward graduation.

Since the re-entry woman is often a transfer student, it is quite likely that the specific courses counting toward graduation requirements will not be identical to those allowed at the school where she began her degree.

Besides providing adult women with information about graduation requirements, the institution should also publicize its own flexibility. For example, some institutions with a physical education requirement waive the requirement for adult students, or allow them to take another class in its place.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

Virtually all continuing education programs assist a variety of women, regardless of their race, color, national origin, religion, marital status, physical disability, or economic status. However, in many cases, being different can pose problems for students. Those students who are members of one or more special populations (such as a re-entry student who is also a handicapped minority woman) can be victims of double or even triple jeopardy.[11] Many schools have offices for special populations. If information about all school policies is made available at these offices, it will most likely reach the students more quickly. Minority students will often first go to a campus office of minority student affairs to have their questions answered. If there are offices serving other groups of students such as displaced homemakers, women, the handicapped, low income students, foreign students, the elderly, etc. these offices should be well informed about school policies such as transfer, residency and graduation requirements.

Higher percentages of Asian, Black, Hispanic, and Native American students start college in a two-year institution and must transfer to a four-year institution in order to obtain a bachelor's degree.[12] Thus, transfer policies are of particular importance to minority reentry women. Many minority women are heads of families and may only be able to attend school part-time.

Additionally, a high proportion will need substantial financial aid.

Other special population groups have their own particular problems. While it is helpful for all students, including re-entry women, to be able to find information on transfer, residency and graduation requirements at a central point, it is especially important that handicapped and older re-entry students not have to shuttle all over campus for this information. Re-entry women who are displaced homemakers, on low incomes, or on welfare, are almost always seeking employment preparation when they attend school. For them, any academic counseling regarding transfer, residency and graduation requirements should be coordinated with career life planning as is done at George Washington University (DC) in their program, Developing New Horizons for Women.

Re-entry women who are also foreign students have different problems. Often, it is very difficult for schools to evaluate transcripts or records from foreign institutions. There are a number of resources available to help colleges and universities deal with the increasing number of foreign transfer students, some of which are listed at the end of this paper.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although policies concerning transfer, residency and graduation requirements are generally best decided by individual college and university administrators, two federal laws may affect these policies: [13]

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

Title IX generally prohibits institutions receiving federal funds from discriminating against students on the basis of sex.[14] Thus, policies must be the same for both sexes. For example, an institution could not have different graduation requirements for men and women. Additionally, in some instances, policies and practices which are ostensibly fair on their face but which disproportionately affect one sex more than the other may in some instances be considered discriminatory. For example, women's groups claim that restrictive policies which do not allow part-time study are discriminatory against women, even though the policy applies to both men and women alike.

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975[15]

This Act prohibits unreasonable discrimination on the basis of age in federally assisted programs and activities. Age is not defined; the Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age *at any age*. Policies which seem reasonable for students 18-22 may deliberately or inadvertently discriminate against older women (and men).

Policies and practices which restrict admissions and transfer of students on the basis of age are illegal. Not allowing a woman to transfer to a particular program because she is "too old" violates the Act. Additionally, policies and practices which have a disproportionate effect on older women (and/or men) may also be considered discriminatory in some instances. For example, if older applicants had more difficulty transferring credits than the traditional 18-22 year old students, there may be a violation of the Act.

WHAT THE INSTITUTION CAN DO

The following recommendations regarding transfer, residency and graduation requirements have been culled from programs and policies already operating at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

Some of these ideas came about to assist re-entry women; in other cases, practices were instituted to help a broader population. However, in all cases, the end result has been to ease the transition for adult women re-entering school, making it more likely that they will stay in school and successfully complete a degree.

Recruiting Re-entry Women as Transfer Students

- Include talks by re-entry women students as part of recruiting and outreach programs. Women who are considering going back to school often respond better to women who have faced problems similar to their own. Just as colleges often send recruiters to high schools, four-year colleges and universities could reach re-entry women (and other students) who are ready to transfer from community colleges.
- Develop special materials aimed at re-entry women and distribute these materials widely throughout the community.
- Publish a general student guide on transfer policies which answers many of the questions older students may have about courses they have taken elsewhere. This guide will also save time for institutional personnel.
- Provide a special pamphlet on graduation requirements geared toward students who have interrupted their education. This information could be combined with other transfer and orientation information.
- Include stories about re-entry women in publicity materials, articles in the local press, etc.
- Include pictures of older women in several recruiting materials.
- Develop recruitment presentations for women's centers, displaced homemaker centers; career and educational counseling centers; and meetings of volunteer and community organizations.
- Make sure that recruiting and pre-enrollment sessions include information on transfer policies.
- Consider having a separate orientation session for transfer students and encourage re-entry women to attend.

  At the University of Virginia's Transfer Welcome Program, students contact new transfers to the University after about two or three weeks into the semester. The students and transfers meet

at informal dinners or get-togethers at the student center. This gives the new transfers a chance to have any of their questions about the campus answered, and also makes them feel an accepted and sought-after segment of the student body. This approach should work well with re-entry women, giving them an opportunity to meet other re-entry transfers in similar situations.

- Send registration information well ahead of registration deadlines to new transfer students by direct mail. Re-entry women often have little free time for an extra trip to the campus.
- Publish guides for students and academic advisers that specify which courses given at nearby schools will be accepted in transfer and which requirements they fulfill. This can be used as a recruiting tool, especially for four-year schools anticipating transfers from two-year schools. For example, Old Dominion University, a four-year institution in Virginia, publishes a transfer guide detailing which courses at any of the Virginia community colleges will fulfill requirements at Old Dominion. The guide matches specific courses given at the local two-year institutions with courses at Old Dominion, giving the exact number of credits transferable from the two-year schools. Publishing a state or regional guide like this encourages community college students to apply at the institution.
- Maintain data concerning the number of applications, admissions, and degrees granted to re-entry women and other adult students. This data can be used in recruiting, in pinpointing barriers for older women, and in developing policies to deal with re-entry students.

Admissions

- List criteria for transfer and make this available to all persons who make decisions about transfer of credits. This will help the decision-makers and also help the institution develop a consistent policy that does not vary substantially from department to department, from school to school, or in large institutions, from campus to campus.
- Design admissions and financial aid forms to accommodate re-entry students by allowing adequate space for information about previous school attendance. Do not require parental consent for older students.
- Include information about deadlines in admissions and financial aid forms.
- Admit transfer students on a provisional basis or as a "special student" if their earlier grades were not up to regular admissions standards. Students who have interrupted their education often do better the second time around.

  At the University of Wisconsin, "special students" attend classes and subsequently are reconsidered for admission on the basis of their classroom performance.

Counseling

- Make academic and vocational counseling available to re-entry students prior to enrollment. Many students find that their interests have shifted while out of school and may want to change their field of concentration.
- Have a designated academic counselor for returning students. This person should be well acquainted with transfer policies and the needs of adult students.
- Develop an education "contract" for each student which puts into writing for the student those courses accepted for transfer credit and the courses needed for graduation. Copies should be filed with the adviser, registrar, and major department to insure that all are in agreement.

  At Marylhurst Education Center (OR), students receive an "Education Contract" after the admissions process is completed. The contract includes the name of the major adviser who will assist with academic advising until graduation, credit evaluation of previous academic experiences, and a summary of completed degree requirements. The contract is updated, revised, and modified on a continuous basis until graduation. With this system, there is no doubt as to what is needed for the student to graduate. While this program is not particularly aimed at re-entry women, it may be helpful to them.

Registration

- Provide evaluation of transfer credits in writing prior to registration so that course selection can be fascilitated.
- Allow transfer students to register with their class, if possible. If transfer students must register at the same time as freshmen for their first semester, reserve a number of spaces for transfer students in upper level courses, or allow transfer students to pre-register for these courses.
- Allow transfer students whose grades were low at a previous institution the option of starting their grade point average afresh at the new school, while retaining credit for courses completed somewhere else. This may be an added incentive to re-entry transfer students.

  At Ohio State University, a student can petition to have her grade point average from another institution eliminated. If the student receives approval, she will receive credit for all courses passed with a grade of C or above. All grades and courses will remain on the record, but the grade point average will be computed only for those courses taken after transferring.

Credit Transfer Options

- Allow credit as an elective for outdated courses not in the student's major (such as a science course taken 20 years ago). De Paul University (IL) does this (see p. 3).
- Offer credit for life experiences and accept them in transfer. Publicize that this option is available. At American University in Washington (DC), the Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) program allows returning adults to earn up to 36 credits. Students develop a portfolio describing what they have previcusly learned outside of the classroom. Not only is this a way to ease transfer students back into the mainstream of student life by stressing writing and evaluation techniques, but it also helps boost the confidence of re-entry women who learn that their time out of school has not gone to waste, and that they can handle a classroom situation.
- Give credit for certificates or documented work experience. Medical laboratory workers who have received certain certificates or have documented five or more years full-time laboratory experience in the last seven years, are eligible for 22-36 quarter hours of lower division science credit at the Marylhurst Education Center (OR).
- Allow transfer credit for non-collegiate courses (such as training courses in business and the military) which have been evaluated by reliable sources.

Credit by Examination

- Allow students to demonstrate their proficiency in a particular subject area by taking a test (such as CLEP) if the transferability of credit is in question. Information about the existence of these tests, whether there is a charge, and where and when they are given should be included on information sent to transfer students.
- Encourage students to take CLEP tests or "challenge" exams *before* they plan their degree program, since test results may affect which courses are taken.

Coordination

- Create an office of transfer student affairs to periodically assess transfer policies, coordinate efforts with other schools, and provide a clearinghouse on transfer information for students, faculty, and administrators.
- Form an advisory committee of re-entry transfer students, faculty, and administrators to evaluate the needs of re-entry women transfers, and to solve related problems.
- When considering new policies, consult with minority persons, displaced homemakers, other re-entry women, handicapped persons, etc. to insure that new policies are fair and equitable.

Support Groups

- Provide offices or centers which serve special groups on campus (such as continuing education programs, minority affairs offices or women's centers) with up-to-date transfer information. Students often check there *first*.
- Start a "buddy system" for re-entry women transfers, where new transfer students are paired with other re-entry women who have been on the campus longer.

Residency Requirements

- Allow experiential credit to fulfill some or all of the residency requirement.

  At Marylhurst Education Center (OR), 40 hours of experiential credit earned through their Prior Learning Experience Program will satisfy the residency requirement.
- Allow independent study and off-campus courses to fulfill some or all of the residency requirement.

  The Illinois Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts Degree Program has a residency requirement of 15 semester hours. However, these hours can be earned through independent study or off-campus courses offered through any one or a combination of five universities participating in the program at any time in the student's educational career.

Training of Personnel

- Work to change the attitude that re-entry women are taking classes as a "hobby." Most women decide to continue their education out of economic necessity, and virtually all take their return to school very seriously. Training programs and workshops for administrators, faculty, and staff can increase the knowledge of the characteristics, motivations, and needs of the growing re-entry student population. For example, the Women's Education Development Incentive at Brevard Community College (FL) sponsors training sessions for faculty to acquaint them with the characteristics and needs of re-entry women on their campus.

Cooperative Arrangements

- Work with other institutions for agreement on transfer policies, put them in writing, and publicize them. Having a set policy will cut down on the time needed to deliberate over individual cases. The Illinois Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts Degree Program, mentioned earlier, is designed specifically to accommodate adult transfer students. Five institutions grant degrees through the program: Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Northeastern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. All five institutions accept courses from anywhere in the country which could be used to complete a degree at a regionally accredited college or university. Typical graduates from the

program have attended two or three colleges in addition to the one conferring the degree. (About half of the graduates are re-entry women.)

- Form consortia or cooperative arrangements with other colleges and universities. Not only will ease of transfer result, but other benefits, such as shared use of faculty and facilities, can be developed to enhance course offerings.

Helping Students Transfer from Your Institution to Another

Information

- Two-year schools can help students by providing them with pertinent information about transfer policies of four-year schools.

  Once a year, the Transfer Office of Montgomery College (MD), a two-year school, surveys over 1,300 four-year colleges and universities to get information for their own students who are getting ready to transfer out. The fact sheet notes deadlines for admissions and financial aid forms at the four-year schools and often has more current information than standard school catalogs.

Mobility Clauses

- Institute mobility arrangements to allow students who must relocate to take courses at other schools and apply the credits to their degree at the original institution.

  American University (DC) has instituted "mobility clause contracts" to allow military personnel, employed people, and others unable to fulfill the usual residency requirements to either begin, continue, or complete studies at another approved institution and still receive a degree from AU in the Bachelor in General Studies (BGS).

  In order to be accepted for this mobility arrangement, the student must apply and be accepted into the BGS degree program, have his or her course of study agreed upon and approved by an academic adviser, and sign a "permit to study" which is filed with the registrar. The student may then begin, continue, or complete a course of study at another approved institution. The student may also opt to drop out temporarily.

  In both cases, mobility status is kept by registering for "Mobility Matriculation" and paying a fee for each fall and spring semester that the student is inactive or at another institution. At some point before the degree is granted from American University the student must have completed a total of 30 semester hours at AU as a degree student. This idea is especially helpful to re-entry women who may have left the area for employment reasons (theirs or their husband's), and wanted to continue their degree.

Transcripts

- On the transcript, include names, locations, and period of attendance of all institutions the student has attended, along with a listing of all credits transferred from these institutions, and degrees earned there. This will help students who transfer somewhere else later on.

CONCLUSION

There are many factors that can influence the successful re-entry of women students. Transfer policies, residency and graduation requirements are only three of these factors, but they are important ones; transfer policies may govern the re-entry woman's decision to enter school, while residency and graduation requirements determine whether she may leave with a degree.

Although the situations and suggestions in this paper cannot anticipate all possible implications that transfer policies, residency and graduation requirements will have for re-entry women, it is hoped that they will provide not only insight about some of the problems, but also their solution.

NOTES

[1] Scientific Manpower Commission, *Manpower Comments*, October, 1979, Vol. 16, No. 8, p. 27 from U.S. Department of Labor, *Monthly Labor Review*, August, 1979.

[2] William A. Dobbie, Ed.D., University of Virginia, 1975, "A Study of the Transfer Policies of the Colleges of the State University of New York," *Dissertation Abstracts*, 1975; and Charles N. Turner, Ph.D., University of Florida, 1975, "Articulation Practices of Selected Privately Supported Four-Year Colleges Within Florida Involving Transfer Students from Community Colleges," *Dissertation Abstracts*, 1975.

[3] J. Knapp and L. Davis, "The Scope and Varieties of Experiential Learning," *New Directions for Experiential Learning*, 1978, *1*(1), 9-21.

[4] For more information on credit by examination, see the paper on experimential credit and non-standard strategies by the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, in press.

[5] William J. McKeefery, "Cooperative Arrangements between Private and Public Colleges," American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 1978, p. 1.

[6] The Carnegie Corporation of New York has recently funded a study entitled, "A Report on the Costs and Benefits of Interinstitutional Programs with Consortium Case Studies and Guidelines." This is available from the Council on Interinstitutional Leadership, P.O. Box 6293, University, AL 35486.

[7] For information, write to the National Registry for Continuing Education, P.O. Box 1008, Iowa City, IA 52243.

[8] See page 11 for information on how to obtain these guides.

[9] See also the paper on experiential credit and other nonstandard strategies by the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, in press.

[10] For information on state residency requirements regarding eligibility for in-state tuition, see the paper on financial aid for re-entry women by the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, in press.

[11] For more information on this subject, see the paper on special populations by the Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, in press.

[12] Michael Olivas, *The Dilemma of Access: Minorities in Two-Year Colleges,* Howard University Press, 1979.

[13] Additional state laws may also apply.

[14] For a description of Title IX, see chart "Federal Laws and Regulations Prohibiting Sex Discrimination in Education Institutions," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1979.

[15] See "The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Women on Campus," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1978.

SELECTED LIST OF RESOURCES

Recruitment of Transfer Students

Chapman, David W., Griffith, John V., and Johnson, Russel H. "A Checklist for Evaluating Recruitment Literature," 1979. Pamphlet contains section on "Faculty and Academic Program" information, including transfer of credits and graduation requirements; 10 pages. Available from the Center for Helping Organizations Improve Choice in Education (CHOICE), 2001 School of Education, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48109. Free

General Transfer Policies

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO). *Transfer Credit Practices of Selected Educational Institutions,* 1979. Takes one institution in each state (usually the state university system) and lists broad policies as to what it will accept in transfer from other institutions in the same state; 146 pages. Available from AACRAO, One Dupont Circle, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20036. $5.00.

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. "Academic Record and Transcript Guide," 1977. This booklet details the essential ingredients of student permanent records and transcripts including those needed for teacher certification. Directed to school registrars and admissions officers to encourage uniform procedures for the transfer of a student's record; 24 pages. Available from AACRAO, One Dupont Circle, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20036. $3.00.

American Schools Association. *Directory of College Transfer Information,* 1973. Very complete, but may need updating. Listing for each institution includes information on type of institution (public, private), number of students, degrees offered, curriculum, summer programs, financial aid, special transfer information, whether or not class schedule is flexible enough to accommodate working students and those with small children, whether CLEP is recognized; 720 pages. Available from Simon and Schuster, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10020. $25.00.

Kintzer, Frederick C. *Middleman in Higher Education,* 1973. Describes articulation policies in 50 states; concentrates on transfer between two-year and four-year institutions; 188 pages. Available from Jossey-Bass, Inc., 433 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. $10.99.

Sandeen, Arthur and Goodale, Thomas. *The Transfer Student: An Action Agenda for Higher Education, 1976.* Makes recommendations for institutional policy, admissions, programs, registration, advising, financial aid, articulation, and agreements. Includes function of an office of transfer affairs; 95 pages. Available from the Institutional Research Council (IRC), 233 Norman Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611. $2.50.

Awarding Credit for Non-Academic Learning

American Council on Education. *The National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs,* 1980; 246 pages. Available from ACE Publications Department, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036. $20.00.

Council for the Advancement of Experiential Learning (CAEL). Offers a series of publications for institutions and students dealing with experiential credit. A free publication list is available from CAEL, American City Building, Suite 212, Columbia, MD 21044. Publications range in price from $4.00 to $10.00.

Meyer, Peter. *Awarding College Credit for Non-College Learning,* 1975; 175 pages. Available from Jossey-Bass, 433 California Street, San Francisco, CA 94104. $10.95.

University of the State of New York. *A Guide to Educational Programs in Noncollegiate Organizations,* 1977 with 1978 supplement. Lists about 1,100 courses offered by non-academic institutions that have been evaluated by the University of the State of New York and recommended for transfer credit; 415 pages. Available from the Program on Noncollegiate Sponsored Instruction, Cultural Education Center, Room 5C83, Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12230. $14.00.

Foreign Student Transfer

American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers. *The World Education Series.* Separate editions by country, updated individually. Offers detailed descriptions of country educational systems and gives recommendations for admission and placement. Available from AACRAO, One Dupont Circle, Suite 330, Washington, DC 20036. About $6.00 each.

U.S. Department of State. *A Bibliography of Reference Materials for Evaluating Foreign Student Materials* (AACRAO-AID project), 1978; 79 pages. Available from the Academic Advisory Service, Office of International Training, Department of State, Agency for International Development, Washington, DC 20523. Free.

The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) provides free consultation on admissions and foreign admissions publications. NAFSA also sponsors the National Credential Evaluation Project to provide supplementary service to institutions enrolling less than 50 foreign students to help resolve difficult or unusual cases. Write to NAFSA, 1860 19th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

Cooperative Arrangements

The Illinois Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities. "The Board of Governors Bachelor of Arts Program: The First Six Years," 1979. This booklet describes their cooperative program, how it was designed for adult students, especially those who are working. Five universities participate: Chicago State University, Eastern Illinois University, Governors State University, Northeastern Illinois University, and Western Illinois University. Includes discussion of experiential credit and transfer; 12 pages. Available from Board of Governors of State Colleges and Universities, 544 Iles Park Place, Springfield, IL 62718. Free.

McKeefery, William J., ed. *Cooperative Arrangements Between Private and Public Colleges,* 1978. A report on current practices and recommendations for policy. Includes different types of arrangements, cost benefits, listing by state, and bibliography; 26 pages. Available from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, One Dupont Circle, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20036. $3.50.

May 1980

Barriers to Re-entry Women: College Transfer Policies, Residency and Graduation Requirements

FIELD TEST

You can assist us in evaluating this paper by completing the following short questionnaire. If you have additional comments. Please use the back of this page or add another sheet. It will help us if you return this questionnaire in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by June 15, 1980 to:

Women's Re-entry Project
Project on the Status and Education of Women
Association of American Colleges
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

1

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

1. What is your primary identification? (Check One)

a. ☐ College president or other administrator. Specify title .....
b. ☐ College faculty member, lecturer, professor
c. ☐ College student
d. ☐ Elementary or secondary school teacher or administrator
e. ☐ State or local education agency employee
f. ☐ Federal employee
g. ☐ Other. Please specify .....
.....

2. In addition, are you: (Check All That Apply)

a. ☐ An affirmative action officer or Title IX coordinator?
b. ☐ Directly involved in programs affecting re-entry women?
c. ☐ At a women's college?
d. ☐ A member of a *campus* committee on women, women's center or women's group?
e. ☐ A member of a *noncampus* women's group, women's center, or advocacy group (WEAL, NOW, National Women's Political Caucus, etc.)?
f. ☐ A member of a women's professional society or women's caucus or committee of an academic discipline?

3. If you are currently at a *postsecondary* institution:

a. Is it: ☐ public or ☐ private?
b. Is it a: ☐ university ☐ other 4-year college ☐ 2-year college or ☐ proprietary school?
c. Is the total enrollment: ☐ under 1,000 ☐ 1,000 to 5,000 ☐ 5,001 to 10,000 ☐ over 10,000?
d. In what state is your institution? .....

4. Do you think this is a useful paper?

a. YES (Respond to **ALL** reasons that apply)
1. ☐ to EVALUATE OR CHANGE POLICIES, such as .....
.....
2. ☐ to START NEW PROGRAMS OR EFFORTS to assist re-entry women, such as .....
.....
3. ☐ to REDESIGN OR IMPROVE EXISTING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, such as .....
4. ☐ to IDENTIFY NEW RESOURCES
5. ☐ to IMPROVE RECRUITMENT of re-entry women to campus by .....
.....
6. ☐ to TRAIN STAFF to work more effectively with issues regarding re-entry women
7. ☐ to EDUCATE OR INFORM OTHERS about the issues. Specify whom .....
.....
8. ☐ to EDUCATE MYSELF ABOUT THE ISSUES
9. ☐ OTHER. Please specify .....
.....

b. ☐ NO, this paper is not useful because .....
.....

5. What, if any, *important* omissions were there from the paper? (Respond to *ALL* that apply)

a. ☐ NONE, it covered all aspects of the topic well.
b. ☐ ISSUES should be described more fully. Please indicate how .....
.....
c. ☐ APPROACHES OR ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES were omitted. Please identify .....
.....
d. ☐ IMPORTANT MODELS OR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS were not mentioned. Please identify .....
e. ☐ KEY RESOURCES were not mentioned. Please identify .....
.....
f. ☐ OTHER. Please describe any other omissions or suggested additions .....
.....

6. Did you find the paper to be clear, well organized and easy to understand?

a. ☐ Yes
b. ☐ It could be improved by .....
.....

7. If you found any factual errors or misleading statements in the paper, please identify them (indicating the page number, error or statement and include the correct information if possible). Use the other side of this page.

8. Please provide any additional comments or criticisms. Enclose other descriptive material, if desired, and use another sheet of paper if needed.